



**U.S. Department of Justice**  
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## **NEWS RELEASE**

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December 16, 2002

### **Immigration Judges Take Oath of Office In New York**

NEW YORK – Vivienne E. Gordon-Uruakpa and Joseph Russelburg were sworn in today as Immigration Judges during an investiture ceremony at 2 p.m., in the U.S. Court of International Trade, Ceremonial Courtroom, One Federal Plaza, New York. Chief Immigration Judge Michael J. Creppy, from the Executive Office for Immigration Review in Falls Church, VA, administered the oath of office.

Judges Gordon-Uruakpa and Russelburg join the ranks of more than 200 Immigration Judges located in 52 Immigration Courts throughout the nation. They are responsible for conducting formal administrative proceedings to determine whether foreign-born individuals who are charged with violations of federal immigration law should be removed from the United States or may be granted relief from removal. Immigration Judges decide each case independently and their decisions are final unless appealed or certified to the Board of Immigration Appeals. In the past year, Immigration Judges completed more than 250,000 such proceedings. They are also authorized to administer oaths of citizenship to candidates for naturalization.

Judge Gordon-Uruakpa was appointed Immigration Judge in June 2002. She received her undergraduate degree from Fordham University in 1980 and her Juris Doctorate from Howard School of Law in 1984. Judge Gordon-Uruakpa served as an assistant district counsel with the Immigration and Naturalization Service in New York from 1996 to June 2002. From 1987 to 1996, she served as a staff attorney and supervisor with the Legal Aid Society, criminal defense division, also in New York. Judge Gordon-Uruakpa worked as a staff attorney/Reginald Heber Smith Fellow with the Legal Services Corporation, Chemung County Neighborhood Legal Services in Elmira, N.Y., from 1984 to 1986. She is a member of the New York Bar.

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Judge Russelburg was appointed Immigration Judge in June 2002. He received his B.A. in 1971 from John Carroll University, and his Juris Doctorate in 1975 from Cleveland State University School of Law. From September 2000 to June 2002, Judge Russelburg worked as an attorney for the Department of Education, Office of the Chief Counsel in Harrisonburg, PA. Judge Russelburg served as a Judge Advocate in the U.S. Army from September 1976 to September 2000. He worked as a claims representative for the Social Security Administration in Cleveland, Ohio, from September 1973 to September 1976. Judge Russelburg is a member of the Ohio and Pennsylvania Bars.

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